

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM
OCTOBER 2, 2012**

Present: Ms. Laurie Graham, Chair
Mr. Daniel Scharfman, Secretary
Ms. Laurie Slap
Mr. Kevin Cunningham
Ms. Anne Lougée
Ms. Pascha Griffiths
Dr. Thomas Kingston, Interim Superintendent
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Business, Finance and Operations

Absent: Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent

Also in attendance: Mr. David Kale, Town Administrator and Mr. Andy Rojas, Selectman

1. **OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to order

Ms. Graham called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Graham led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Citizens' Concerns

Ms. Maura Mallowney expressed concern about class sizes at the Wellington School. Ms. Graham stated that it is also a concern of the School Committee. Dr. Kingston stated that he would address the subject in his Superintendent's report.

1.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

1.5 Chairman's Report

Ms. Graham welcomed David Kale, Town Administrator and invited him to the table. Mr. Kale stated that he looks forward to working with the School Committee and School Department.

Ms. Graham updated the Committee on the following upcoming events.

International Walk to School Day – October 3

One Book One Belmont – October 4

Winn Brook Curriculum Night – October 4

Food Pantry opens at modulars – October 6

Belmont Serves Day – October 8

Joey's Park Walk – October 14

1.6 Superintendent's Report

Dr. Kingston stated that he is concerned about class sizes at Wellington. He explained that students moving into the Wellington School District will be assigned to the closest other elementary school in Belmont, and that once a student starts in a school, that student and his or her siblings will remain there for the duration of their K-5 education. Some of the Wellington classrooms will have additional time from aides to reduce the impact of the current large classes. The question of class size is also an issue at Chenery and Belmont High School. Some grades have large numbers with a couple of classes reaching 31 students. Each school's administration is working to balance class sizes by moving some students to different sections. This is most feasible at the high school.

Dr. Kingston explained that adding a complete new classroom could cost approximately \$120,000. He further stated that he plans to form a group of advisors to discuss the question of what the ideal number of students in a classroom might be. The group would consist largely of one or two members suggested by each school's PTO or PTA. Dr. Kingston explained that research suggests current testing data does not show evidence of an achievement deficit in Belmont as a result of larger class sizes.

Dr. Kingston updated the Committee on the Wellington Principal Search. A screening committee has been created and they will be reviewing applications. The screening committee will then invite selected applicants for interviews. They will choose 4 or 5 finalists who will be interviewed by Dr. Kingston and Ms. Darias. There will be opportunities for community members to meet the finalists and provide feedback for Dr. Kingston and Ms. Darias to consider in making their selection. Dr. Kingston stated that he hopes to hire a new principal by November to allow for some overlap time. Ms. Graham reminded the community that it is the Superintendent who makes the final decision on hiring a new Principal.

Dr. Kingston mentioned that he has started a blog and he invited community members to leave remarks if they wish.

Dr. Kingston explained that Belmont showed very strong results on MCAS. The district is now on level 2 which means the district is meeting its goals with the exception of some subgroups at Chenery.

Dr. Kingston updated the Committee on the Butler Playground. He thanked Mr. Rojas for his help in putting the project together. The “community build” may take place within the next month or so.

Dr. Kingston explained that the Chenery Middle School has sent out a Stranger Danger Alert due to the fact that a stranger was seen standing near the school. He left when approached by staff.

Dr. Kingston announced that two teachers, Brian Bisceglia, a grade 3 teacher at Butler and Shoba Reginald, a grade 7 science teacher at Chenery would be taking part in the Earth Watch Program. They will be traveling to Nova Scotia to study the effects of climate change on mammals and will be communicating via Skype and other tools with students in Belmont about their experiences.

1.7 Director of Finance, Business and Operations’ Report

Mr. DiCologero gave the final report out for FY12 pending the “final closure of town books”. The report includes the following:

General Fund

In the area of salaries there was a positive balance of \$79,000 due to staff members being on leave, and some attrition (with new staff being hired at a lower salary level than departing staff). This is being offset by a non-salary deficit of \$77,600 due to expenses exceeding the budget in areas such as system-wide instructional and support expenses, and Special Education tuitions and expenses. The School Department is ending the year with a general fund positive balance of \$1,535.00.

Grants

The Circuit Breaker account had an ending balance of \$172,000 which will be spent in 2013.

Revolving Accounts

There are a number of accounts where the balance was higher than the School Committee recommendation. In the Athletic Revolving Account there is a balance of \$115,000. Mr. DiCologero stated that he has been working with Jim Davis to identify program infusions to purchase with the balance to fortify the program. He stated that they have encumbrances and expenses in the Town’s MUNIS system of approximately \$67,000 for infusions for the program which is made up of uniforms, equipment and supplies. In addition, Mr. Davis has identified another \$33,000 in infusions to fortify the spring and winter seasons for the year. Those costs will include additional team uniforms, equipment, transportation and payment of officials. In total they have identified \$158,000 in infusions.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2.1 There was no unfinished business.

3. **MAJOR BUSINESS**

3.1 Vote to approve MOA for Unit D Contract – Exhibit A

Ms. Graham invited Selectman Andy Rojas to the table. She stated that part of the School Committee's obligation when voting to approve a union contract is to have a representative from the Board of Selectmen attend. The Unit D contract was settled in June.

On a motion offered by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Scharfman it was

VOTED unanimously to approve the MOA for the Unit D Contract – Exhibit A.

3.2 Grade 8 Washington D.C. Field Trip – Exhibit B

Ms. Graham invited Kristen St. George, Principal of Chenery and Daniel Coplon Newfield, Assistant Principal of Chenery to the table to explain the trip to the School Committee.

Mr. Coplon-Newfield updated the Committee on the Washington trip that was taken last year. The trip was a very large undertaking but was a tremendous success. A total of 247 students attended as well as several staff members. The students spent 3 full days in Washington D.C. visiting sites. The trip was connected to the 8th grade curriculum. In addition, it was important socially and emotionally for the students to have this experience away from home. The trip was very successful for the faculty and staff who attended as chaperones. The overwhelming response from parents and students was that the trip exceeded expectations.

Mr. Coplon-Newfield stated that the hope is to have the Washington D.C. trip become a yearly event.

Mr. Scharfman suggested that the Committee vote on the Washington D.C. trip as a new program and then vote separately on approval of this year's specific overnight, out of state trip.

On a motion offered by Mr. Scharfman and seconded by Ms. Slap, it was

VOTED unanimously to approve the curriculum changes represented in the document marked Exhibit B for October 2, 2012.

On a motion offered by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Scharfman, it was

VOTED unanimously to authorize an out-of-state trip to Washington D.C. at the end of the 2012-2013 school year as proposed in exhibit B.

3.3 Superintendent's Evaluation and Report – Exhibit D

Ms. Graham read the Superintendent's Evaluation – Exhibit D which will be posted on the Belmont Public Schools website. The School Committee discussed the results and offered comments.

On a motion offered by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Ms. Lougee it was,

VOTED unanimously to approve the Superintendent's Evaluation and Report as presented in – Exhibit D.

Due to the late hour, Ms. Graham suggested a change to the agenda so that the School Committee could vote on a delegate to the MASC Conference before any members had to leave for the evening.

Moved agenda item: Vote to appoint a delegate to the MASC Conference

On a motion offered by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Ms. Slap it was

VOTED unanimously to nominate Mr. Scharfman as the delegate to the MASC Conference.

4. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES/LIAISONS

4.1 Wellington Building Committee

Ms. Graham stated the Building Committee will be discussing the rooftop units. The punch list is still being addressed.

4.2 Finance Subcommittee

Ms. Slap stated that the Subcommittee met and reviewed the FY12 report that Mr. DiCologero presented earlier. Mr. Cunningham stated that they met with the new Chair of the Warrant Committee Subcommittee on Education, Mr. Robert Sarno. The group discussed how the work flow gets accomplished in relation to Student Services. Mr. Cunningham also attended the MUNIS training. He informed the Committee that the town has a budget module as part of MUNIS but has not used it as yet.

Ms. Lougee stated that the members have begun to review information received from Jim Davis on the athletic fee structure. They will also be looking at the fee structure for Fine and Performing Arts.

4.3 Policy Subcommittee

Ms. Graham stated the Policy Subcommittee had one meeting. The topic was fund raising and naming rights. Mr. Scharfman will gather information on how different groups conduct their fundraising. Ms. Graham will meet with the School Committee's legal counsel (Morgan Brown and Joy) regarding what authority the School Committee has over groups that support school activities but are not part of the schools. Mr. Scharfman stated that he has collected contact information for many of the various friends groups. He will develop a survey to send out to groups.

4.4 Warrant Committee

Ms. Slap updated the Committee on the change in Warrant Committee Leadership.

4.5 Capital Budget Committee

Ms. Lougee stated that the Capital Budget Committee has not met since their last meeting but plan to meet on October 18.

Dr. Kingston stated that Dan Richards, Principal of Belmont High School has a draft report from NEASC which he will comment on and send back for a final report.

4.6 Student Representative

There were no student representatives in attendance.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Consent Agenda

5.2 Personnel Items – Informational

There were no personnel items.

5.3 Business Items

There were no business items.

5.4 Approval of Minutes

On a motion offered by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Ms. Graham, it was

VOTED unanimously to approve the minutes of September 11, 2012 as amended. The vote was 5-0-0, Ms. Griffiths having left the meeting earlier.

6. FUTURE BUSINESS

October 5, 2012
Curriculum Subcommittee Meeting
SAB Conference Room
9:30 a.m.

October 5, 2012
Policy Subcommittee Meeting
SAB Conference Room
10:30 a.m.

7. ENCLOSURES

EDCO Roundtable Information

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:40 p.m. on a motion offered by Mr. Scharfman and seconded by Mr. Cunningham, it was

VOTED unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The vote was 5-0-0, Ms. Griffiths having left the meeting earlier.

Respectfully submitted by



Daniel Scharfman, Secretary